

Black Pine Animal Sanctuary

Animal Facts

Breed: BOA CONSTRICTOR

Names / Sex / Age:

Choker	Male	15 years old (Columbian boa, possibly a red-tail)
Slitheran	Unknown	12 years old (Red-tail boa)

Previous Home: Private homes.

Native to: South & Central America, Mexico, and Columbia. Bred in captivity for pet trade in America.

Size: Normally 5-8 feet, but can reach 9-14 feet. Average under 60 pounds, but can weigh over 100.

Life Expectancy: 20 - 40 years.

Status: Endangered or restricted.

Diet: Amphibians, lizards, other snakes, birds, and mammals. At Black Pine, fed non-living rats or rabbits, about 7-8 inches long.

Facts:

- Closely related to the python, though from different continents
- They have heat pits, or holes, in their upper lip which helps detect heat radiations for prey purposes
- Boas have a Jacobson's organ (like cats) which enables them to taste smells, this is why they flicker their tongues
- They shed skin about once every 4-6 weeks if healthy
- Just before shedding, the snake's eyes will cloud over, making it nearly blind and more dangerous to handle
- Snakes do not blink, they have a clear scale that covers their eye
- Boas mature at about 3 years
- When mature, a boa can be as strong as it's handler
- Boas, unlike pythons, give live birth, eggs remain in the female. They can give birth to 12-64 snakes
- When a boa kills, it so quickly wraps itself around it's prey to choke it that the prey has no time to react
- Boas have a prehensile tail which supports their body in the trees.
- They are equally adept to ground and trees
- Boas are adequate swimmers but not truly aquatic.
- Boas are endangered or restricted due to hunting for leather or meat
- Boas cannot n hinge their jaws as myth tells, so feeding something too large can hurt them
- When full grown, their feces can be as large as that of a St. Bernard.

Personal History:

Choker was adopted from private owners who raised him from birth. A college couple, once school was finished and they began working full time they no longer had time for Choker and didn't want to sell him. They wanted to ensure he could live where he would be handled and cared for properly. For the first several years Choker was handled routinely and was never aggressive. However, following the move to the new site in late 2006 Choker slowly became more and more territorial. Today he is no longer handled unless for husbandry purposes because he has tried to strike at keepers several times.

Slitheran came to the park in January 2004, also from a private home in Churubusco, IN. Her owner, a teenager, was allowed to get a snake much to the opposition of his mother. After a short time mom no longer wanted the snake in the house and demanded it be relocated. Much smaller than Choker, Slitheran is still handled and presented for educational purposes. She is very active.